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Park Council News

APR 19 1976

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

UNDER THE PRESIDENT'S BYLINE

Susan Watson

THANK YOU, THANK YOU - all you good people who have sent in your membership contributions to keep the Park Council going. We are most appreciative and will strive to continue to bring you park and conservation news in a quality Newsletter. Please keep those memberships coming. Thank you also for your comments. Keep those coming, too. We like to hear from you, and we welcome your suggestions.

WE HAVE GREAT CONCERN this year for our large parklands and our ranchers and farmers. Dry conditions have forced the removal of many of the county's herds, which normally dot the hillsides at this time of the year. If we continue to have only light sprinkles, this summer will be hard on the wildlife, too. Vernal pools and springs are not going to supply needed moisture.

Contra Costa County has joined the list of counties that have declared disaster conditions from the drought, which means that ranchers and farmers will be able to have low-cost loans. "It's just one of those things that happens," said one rancher. "It's nothing to be ashamed of. The elements are against us."

WATCH FOR OUR JUNE ISSUE! The June News will be a gala issue on summer doings in our state, regional, and community parks. We shall feature organized activities plus individual opportunities for summer enjoyment.

BUT HUMAN ARRANGEMENTS of taxation don't have to be against the rancher and the open space lands. Your president (wearing the hat of another organization) recently testified before the County's Local Agency Formation Commission on the pulling back of the lines of the County's hospital service districts to coincide with urban development lines. In farming and ranching, acres, in effect, are paying taxes, and to the rancher, acreage is livelihood, not services. To the urban dweller, acreage is not the point; services are.

The loss of revenue to the hospital districts was small- - less than 1% of the budgets- - but to the rancher the burden of such service taxes, unused services by him, is critical. The farmer seems to be fighting not only the vagaries of nature but also the vagaries of human laws. When the economic survival of a healthy agricultural system is at stake, the confusion of rural land with urban land is unconscionable.

Fortunately, LAFCO voted to pull back this service area, as they are beginning to do with others, proving once again that this is one of the best-informed commissions in the Bay Area.

This June, the Contra Costa Park Council will change officers. The Council always welcomes new members and new participants, believing that many hands make light work and that much interest makes good parks. We meet only four times a year to consult on the newsletter and current projects. We are glad to receive articles from anyone with something interesting to say about parks and open space.

Won't you contribute a little time or talent to help keep the Park Council alive and well? Write to us at P.O. Box 4322, Walnut Creek, CA 94596. If you prefer, call Susan Watson at 254-4077 or Pat Whittle at 933-2295. Join us on Thursday, April 29, at 8 p.m. in the offices of Patrick Whittle Associates, 1700 N. Broadway, Suite 207, Walnut Creek, for the next quarterly meeting.

TAO HOUSE HAS BEEN PURCHASED by the Eugene O'Neill Foundation from Mrs. Charlotte Gerdes of Piedmont, but many contributions are still needed to complete the purchase and to open the house to cultural use.

This lovely house, with its inspiring views of Mt. Diablo, was the residence of Eugene O'Neill when he wrote some of his greatest plays. Send contributions to the Eugene O'Neill Foundation, P.O. Box 402, Danville 94526.

IN A JOINT PROJECT with Fred Garland of People for Open Space, Alvin Burton of the Park Council has been researching open space areas that are not in the Williamson Act. The tax reduction benefits are great to lands under the Land Conservation Act contracts; but, we feel, many owners who are absentee or are part of trusts do not know of these benefits. Letters explaining this contract will go to such owners as a public service of the two organizations.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF MORE communication towers on the North Peak of Mt. Diablo has been in the news lately and has worried your Park Council. We wrote to the County that visual and auditory factors may be considerable for any further development of this nature and that we should like a formal environmental impact report so that all of us can make proper decisions.

THERE ARE TWO BOOKS that we'd like to recommend to you. One is a newly revised edition of the soft-cover *Mt. Diablo, the "Devil" Mountain of California*, by Charles A. Bohakel. We found this guidebook charming, with many photographs, some from the early days. History, geology, origin of the name, maps, and much more are within this little volume. You can order copies for $2.25 each from Charles A. Bohakel, P.O. Box 817, Antioch, CA 94509.

The other book is *We Almost Lost Detroit*, by John G. Fuller (Reader's Digest Press, Thomas Y. Crowell Co.) This well-researched book may help you understand the nuclear controversy. We'll let the author say it in his own words: "Any layman who cares to study these facts--and there are a jungle of them--can learn enough to make his own judgment. And he can do so without being told what to think by either the passionate supporters of nuclear energy or their equally passionate critics. Propaganda on both sides is heavily loaded. But the facts can speak for themselves. They emerge clear and unassailable." Refreshing.

FINALLY, a study financed by U.S. government funds said that Americans can live just as well as they do now but use only half as much energy. The change would require only "cosmetic changes," such as travel in more efficient cars and use of mass transit; better insulation and more efficient heating units for houses; use of more efficient freight haulage, such as railroads; improvements of food processing and packaging, supplemented by local sources of food; and more efficient appliances and lighting and re-use of heating now cast off as waste.

Well, what's all this about having to go back to the Stone Age? We can have our cake and eat it, too, with a little simple thought, such as "Waste not, want not".

MARSH HOME "ROMERIA" PLANNED

Paul Schorr

The long-awaited restoration of the 120-year-old John Marsh home, now being planned by a Berkeley architectural firm, may be some $25,000 short if the East County home is to be completely restored. According to the architectural firm of Ratcliff, Slama, and Cadwalader, the cost of restoration is "roughly estimated" at $395,000. That is $25,000 more than the County Natural Resources and Recreation Commission's $370,000 budget for the project, which probably means that the second and third stories of the home will remain unrestored. If the architectural plans are approved on schedule, the commission expects the restoration project to begin in September.

In an effort to raise additional funds for restoration of the historic stone residence, the Contra Costa Bicentennial Committee is sponsoring a John Marsh Home one-day "Romeria," May 16, 1976. So far, six schools have elected to take part in the Elementary School Period Technique Fair that will be a part of the Romeria. Others taking part are expected to include artists, historical societies, square dancers, musicians, and sponsors of food and entertainment booths. Participating schools will be assigned spaces in booths for demonstrations and sale of their period foodcrafts, handcrafts, and games of the early American era. Full details on participation may be obtained from:

Mr. R. S. Bloss, Chairman
County Bicentennial Committee
838 Escobar Street
Martinez, CA 94553

John Marsh, a doctor and rancher, was one of the first white settlers in the East County area before he was murdered in 1856 by three of his workers. The home, finished in 1856, in its time was considered the most palatial home in California.

HOW TO OPEN UP BROOKS ISLAND FOR PUBLIC USE?

Grace Lewis

Following reclassification of this 45-acre islet off Richmond's Inner Harbor from a "Regional Shoreline" to a "Regional Preserve" and a detailed analysis of its resources, the East Bay Regional Park District is now preparing a land use development plan to spell out the possibilities for its future.

That the now-solitary island, jeweled with native grasses and wild flowers and a sanctuary of nesting birds, will be opened there can be no question.

In February, EBRPD General Manager Richard C. Trudeau reminded the Park District Directors that "we have an obligation to both the State and Federal governments (which made its purchase possible) to pursue our planning efforts with a goal of providing for more public use."

The crux lies in interpretation of what appears unanimous recorded opinion: that EBRPD keep Brooks Island essentially in its natural state and not subjected to heavy development of intense public use.

Currently on record behind this restrictive point of view are the EBRPD Directors, who enacted the protective "preserve" classification; the EBRPD volunteer Park Advisory Committee; the Contra Costa County Recreation and Natural Resources Commission; the Contra Costa Hills Club; several organizations in the American Indian movement; and 60-some persons attending a public hearing on the resource analysis in Richmond in January.

On the other side are those, articulating on and off in the media, who presumably favor development of

Brooks for play and picnic grounds along the lines of the state-operated 740-acre Angel Island.

When Brooks was reclassified, a measure of protection was afforded through the EBRPD Master Plan, which places preservation and enhancement as the primary objective of a "Regional Preserve," with interpretation and enjoyment being secondary. Other EBRPD preserves include Huckleberry Botanic and Robert Sibley.

However, Trudeau advised Directors that, beyond their reclassification action, "it is important that you have the land use development plan before you to assist in keeping Brooks Island a limited facility."

He explained that the island will come under review this spring by Richmond's Special Planning Area Citizen's Advisory Committee, whose scope takes in development of the Inner Harbor.

(Trudeau is a member of this committee. EBRPD Chief of Planning and Design Lewis Crutcher is an alternate member.)

EBRPD's Resource Analysis dramatized the island's tenacious grasp on survival with:

"Perhaps the most significant feature of Brooks Island is the fact that it is still there."

It has survived several determined movements for industrial and commercial use over the past century, from a railroad freight terminal to a heliport. A gigantic gash was carved out of its Bayward flank in 46 years of quarrying. Vandals have plundered the middens and graves of the Indians who lived there for centuries to perhaps as late as the 1840s.

Designated Isla de Carmen in the first nautical survey of the Bay in 1775 and later known as Sheep Island, Brooks has been used for cattle and sheep grazing, orcharding and viticulture, and quarrying, since the Indians left.

Since 1965, the island has been leased by the Sheep Island Gun Club and used for hunting pheasants, which are raised there. It is legally accessible only through permission of the Park District to botanists, ornithologists, archeologists, and other responsible groups.

The Park District acquired Brooks for $625,000 in February 1969, and the Club has continued its occupation, paying $2,720 a year and providing resident supervision which has, in effect, allowed regression to a natural state through protection of the wild environment and control of vandalism, particularly arson.

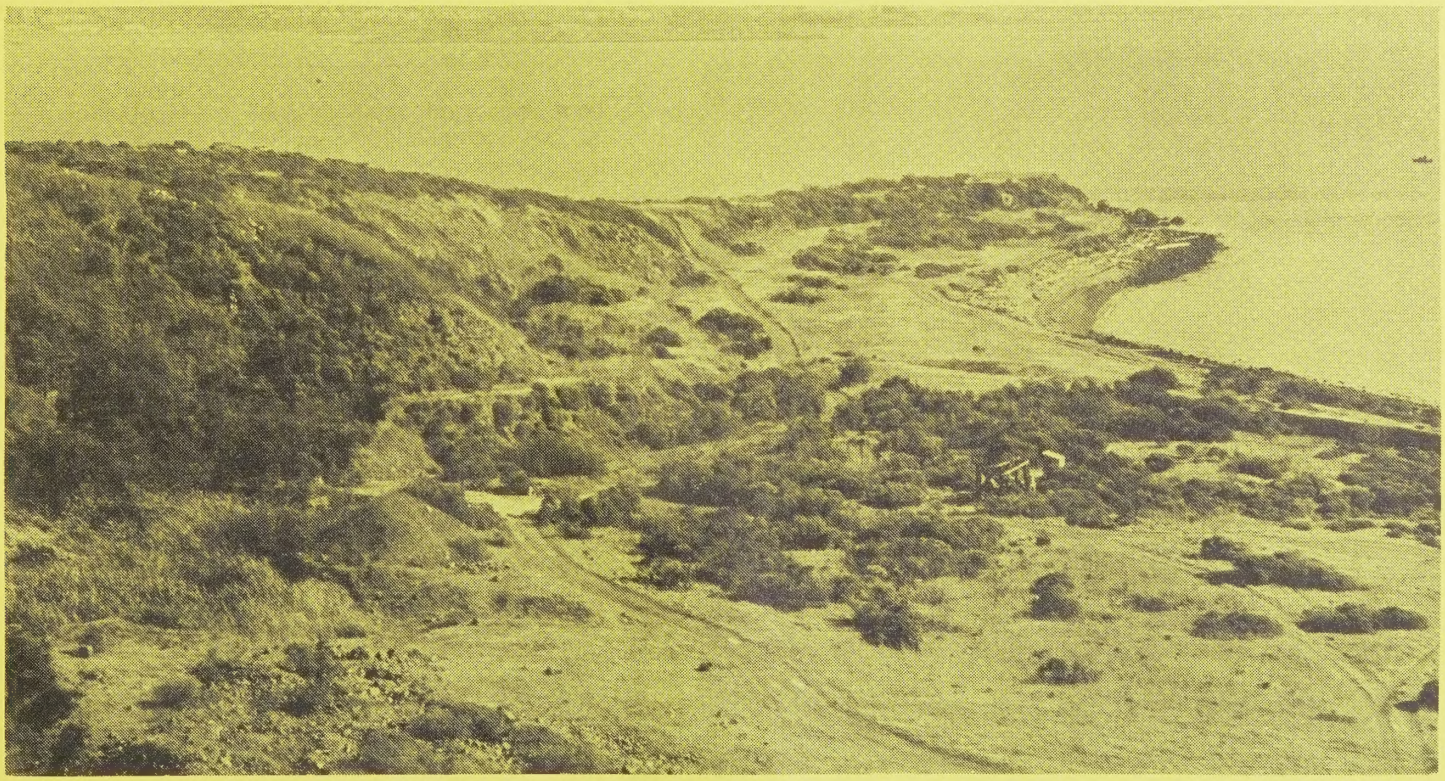
EBRPD can terminate the lease with notice at the end of six-month intervals, the intervals to begin January 1 or June 30 of each year.

UP SPROUT COMMUNITY GARDENS EVERYWHERE!

Mark A. Malony

The self-reliant provision of food for a neighborhood is one result of community gardening. An equally important consequence is the enjoyment and sense of accomplishment shared by gardeners of all ages and persuasions. The simple value of a community garden is good food and good friends.

Community gardening is not new to this country. The Victory Gardens of World War II have surfaced



Brooks Island has survived quarrying, vandalism, and plundering. It is now protected as a Regional Preserve by EBRPD.

under the new name as a response to the economic and resource crises America now faces. This is a grass-roots movement toward self-help, an aid far more satisfying than food stamps to people in need, and a gradual and significant redirecting of priorities. Beyond personal nutritional and recreational benefits, gardening builds community pride and stimulates environmental awareness. Increased urban food production and greater use of local resources will prove to be important steps in solving ecological problems, from solid waste to petro-chemical dependence and pollution.

Contra Costa is luckyto have two full-time persons, employed under federal Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) funding, whose main responsibility is the development of community vegetable gardens on vacant public and private land. Under the name UP-SPROUT, the Community Gardens Project has been active for almost a year, succeeding in opening over 21 acres of arable Contra Costa land to landless gardeners.

Last year's developments were hindered by the late start of the project. This year, with sufficient lead time, garden planning and preparation involves many interested individuals and families as well as significant participation by local parks and recreation departments and districts. In Concord's Nature Park and on Pleasant Hill Parks District land support included installation of water systems. Gardens here have become part of the regular recreation programs. Recently, parks districts in Pleasant Hill and Brentwood, with assistance from UPSPROUT, submitted applications for matching state Land and Water Conservation Funds Program monies to improve their local sites.

Low-income areas are harder to mobilize because of the threat of vandalism. Yet UPSPROUT'S experience has proven that gardens can survive without fences even in "rough" areas. Most important in getting a garden together is the commitment from a handful of courageous persons who believe that the benefits outweigh the risks.

Current activities include classes in Concord and Martinez, with seniors' programs and elementary schools; out-reach through slide presentations to community groups; the growing of seedlings from donated seeds in the project's own hothouse for distribution to gardners; workdays in March on-site in Pittsburg and West Pittsburg; and the ongoing development of educational materials.

For more information, speakers, land, and/or resources, call 372-2287.

CONTRA COSTA DISTRICT ATTORNEY PROSECUTES DOW CHEMICAL

Susan Watson

The Contra Costa District Attorney's office has filed a criminal complaint against the Dow Chemical Co. for alleged illegal diversion work done on the stream bed of Kirker Creek. This work was done without a permit, according to the complaint. The work on the streambed was connected to the further development of the Dow plant in Contra Costa County.

Also, a suit by the Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, and People for Open Space has been filed in Solano County against that county charging that the county illegally granted a rezoning permit for a petrochemical plant. The suit has charged violation of various portions of the General Plan sections of the California Government Code, portions of the California Administrative Code requiring sufficiency of method and content of the Environmental Impact Report, and portions of the California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (Williamson Act).

A spokesperson for People for Open Space stated that they found having to take the matter to court unfortunate; however, the gross violations of law and the unresolved environmental considerations (ruination of the finest dry farming area in the State, the severe air pollution problem, the excessive use of fresh water, and the inevitable problems resulting from 100% increase of tanker traffic by Dow alone in this delicate river area) made it necessary to seek redress through judicial action.

MORGAN TERRITORY REGIONAL PRESERVE: SOMETHING NEW AND DIFFERENT

Manny Lindner

Seven miles southeast of Mount Diablo the land rises to a narrow, gently rolling highland. Except for Diablo itself, this is the highest part of Contra Costa County. Its western edge forms the Black Hills. To the east the land drops off 1600 feet to a series of valleys and low ridges that finally merge into the San Joaquin Valley. On this highland are to be found the headwaters of Marsh Creek.

This is the setting of the new Morgan Territory Regional Preserve. In any context, enthusiasts frequently overuse the word unique, but one would be hard put to find anything quite like this new and unusual addition to our regional park system. It offers an impressive variety of landscapes in an area only one mile wide and one-and-one-half miles long. There are meadows lined with oak woodlands more reminiscent of England than of California. In the latter part of April these meadows are carpeted with millions of small yellow flowers known as goldfields (*Baeria chrysostoma*).

Through the geologic ages Marsh Creek has cut a deep gash through the middle of the preserve. As a result, it has created a series of lovely fern-lined cataracts and cascades, and a sheer escarpment to challenge the most experienced of rock climbers.

On the area's eastern flank the vegetation changes from oak and bay to thickets of large manzanita, some with smooth, red trunks nearly two feet thick. This change of ground cover is quite likely the result of two factors: a sharp reduction in rainfall on the eastern slope, and a tilted rock stratum so close to the surface of the ground that in some places the surface is simply an exposed bare slab of rock.

On clear days there are views of the Sierras, the Sutter Buttes, and Mount Lassen. To the northwest, the backdrop of Mount Diablo frames a thousand different scenes to whet the interest of the photographer.

Although the area has been grazed for many years, wildlife is plentiful. Deer and bobcat are common, although the cats are seldom seen. At least one golden eagle makes its home here.

The preserve has not yet been officially opened for public use. However, occasional organized hiking groups have been able to see and enjoy the area's beauty. This year, on April 25, the Sierra Club will provide another such opportunity. Look under "Coming Events" for details.

THE DISTRICT, THE DELTA, AND THE PERIPHERAL CANAL

John E. DeVito, General Manager, Contra Costa County Water District

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation export operations since 1951, and California State exports since 1962, have caused considerable environmental damage to the Delta *without a Peripheral Canal.*

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, the Suisun Marsh, and the surrounding areas are the environmental, social, and economic base of the Contra Costa County Water District (CCCWD). In fulfilling our responsibilities to the area and the citizens we serve, it is the District's position that the reasonable, beneficial uses of water within the Delta and in areas immediately adjacent to it must be protected. These beneficial uses, in addition to environmental needs, include the municipal, industrial and agricultural water supply for this District and the remainder of the Delta.

CCCWD diverts water from two points within the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. By way of its water right at Mallard Slough at the western end of the Delta and at Rock Slough near Knightsen, 250,000 people, 23 major industries, and 250 farms within the District depend solely on the Delta for their water supply. Consequently we have a vital interest in the protection and enhancement of this unique aquatic system.

Problems in, and damages accruing to, the Delta today are due to the overcommitment of both water supply and water quality to existing and potential contractors by the Federal Bureau of Reclamation and the State Department of Water Resources. There is an obvious failure to recognize the limited amount of water that is "surplus" to the Delta needs and therefore available for export.

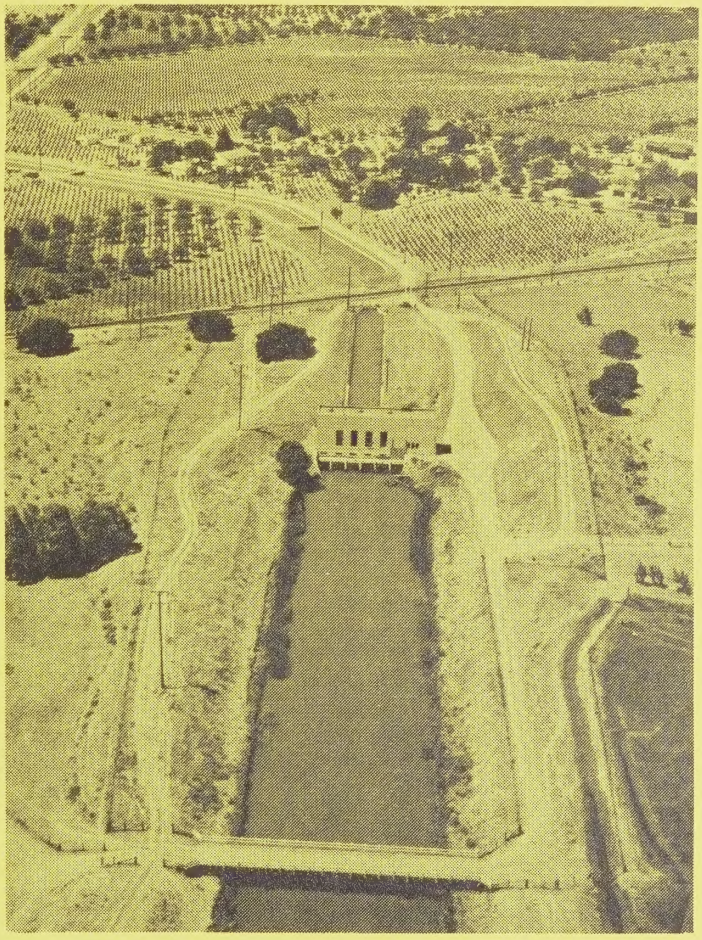
As envisioned and planned by the USBR, the primary purpose of the Peripheral Canal is to solve the problems of contractual overcommitment by the Federal and State water projects.

As proposed in the USBR Feasibility Report, the Peripheral Canal can either destroy the Delta or preserve and enhance it. The end result can only be determined, in advance, by setting the priorities and objectives in both Federal and State law. Will the Delta be first priority, as specified by State law, or last priority as stated and planned by the USBR under existing Federal law?

Although the USBR originally believed it was obligated to protect the Delta and, in fact, initially operated the CVP to provide that protection, the USBR now states that it has no obligation to meet EPA Delta water quality standards except as an incidental project function, subordinate to the demands of agricultural contractors in the San Joaquin Valley. In other words, the USBR gives crops and the livestock of the San Joaquin Valley a higher priority than human beings in the CCCWD and the Delta aquatic environment.

What has long been needed for the Delta without the Peripheral Canal is to provide for Delta protection in the Federal laws governing the USBR Central Valley Project (CVP). It must be remembered that both the Bureau and the State have been exporting growing amounts of water from the Delta. The Bureau's Tracy Pumping Plant must now operate near full capacity, 4,700 cfs, year-round to supply their upper San Joaquin Valley contractors. In addition, the USBR uses export capacity in the California Aqueduct to serve Federal service areas from Fresno County south to Kern County.

The District has long sought, and continues to propose, a Congressional Act that would compel the USBR, who control most major Sierra streams, to cooperate with and operate by the same rules as California. The State controls only the Feather River through the Oroville Project. Our proposed Federal legislation extends the existing purposes of the CVP to include water quality and the preservation and enhancement of fish, wildlife, recreational and environmental resources of the Delta, the San Francisco Bay Estuary, and Suisun Marsh. Furthermore, we believe our proposed legislation would restore to California its legal and traditional role in comprehensive management of the State's water resources to achieve multi-purpose objectives.



Contra Costa Canal intake at Rock Slough. Beyond the pumping plant (center), the canal can be seen snaking through rich agricultural lands toward Mt. Diablo.

Until Delta protection is legislatively guaranteed, the District opposes the Peripheral Canal or any other facility that could further damage the Delta.

Two different approaches are advanced for solving the Federal vs. California State water dilemma: litigation or legislation.

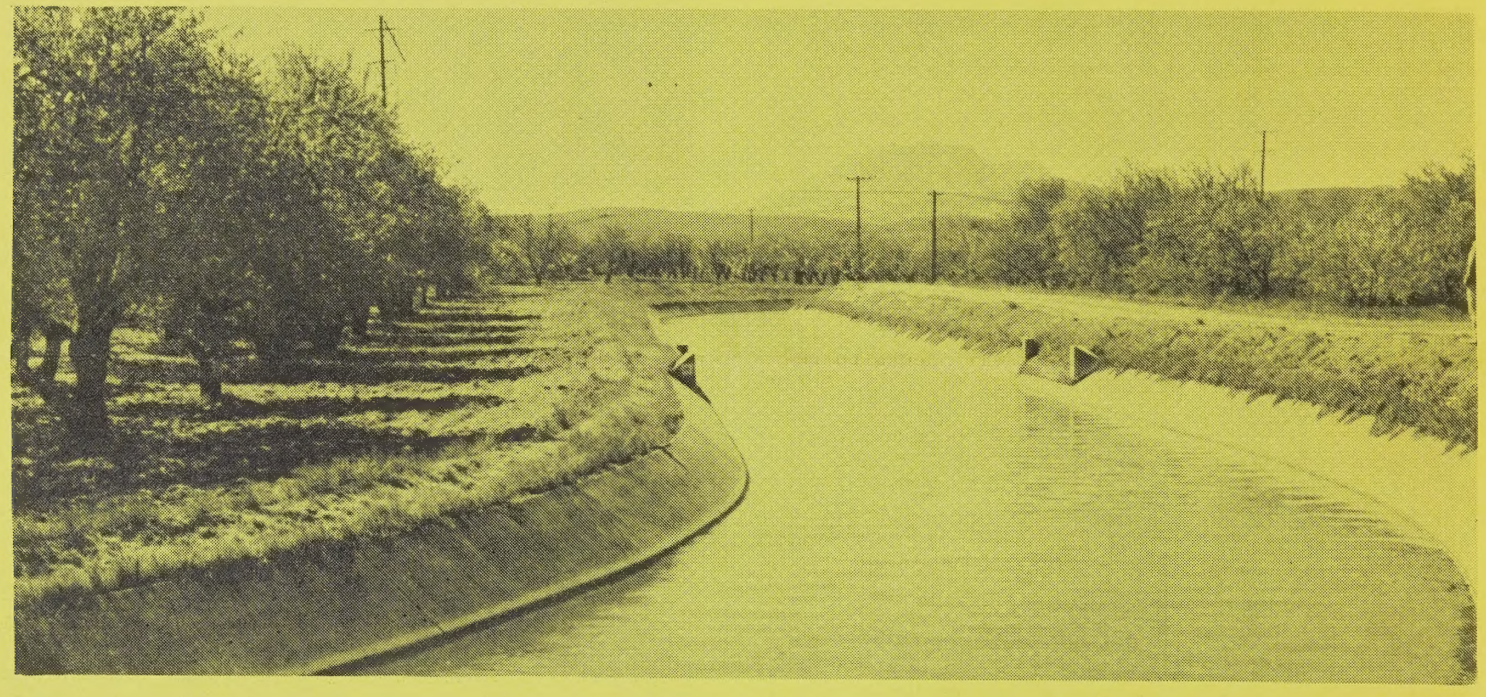
Experts point to past legal cases and conclude that litigation would be drawn out over many years. It would be very costly, and Federal supremacy would most probably prevail, solving nothing. In the meantime, the USBR continues contracting away its capability of satisfying the Delta needs to far-in-the future San Joaquin Valley irrigation purposes such as the vast corporate excess land holdings in the Westlands Water District. Delta needs then could not be met, or would have to be satisfied, by USBR proposed dams on north coast streams at a water cost many times that currently being contracted away: an alternative that would be neither economically nor environmentally acceptable.

Accordingly, CCCWD has always sponsored and supported the only realistic solution to ever-growing water problems; that is, a prompt legislative and administrative resolution of California's water resources issues.

Joaquin agricultural contractors that they will get their water even if northern and eastern Contra Costa residents drink salt water. East Bay Municipal Utility District, which gets its water directly from the Mokelumne system in the Sierra, can help the Contra Costa Water District customers in an emergency (as when the Andrus Island levee broke) but does not have the long-term allocations to take over the entire system. Contra Costa's water systems must be supplemented by fresh water from the Delta.

A federal judge's recent decision that federal water projects are not subject to state control has compounded the problem. Contributing to more problems are the plans for heavy industrialization at the mouth of the Sacramento River, with facilities that are large water users - facilities that will return more water to the air via steam than they will to the river.

The Contra Costa Water District, which gets its water from Rock Slough, has said for years that the



The Contra Costa Canal supplies the water needs of a quarter-million people, plus major industries and many farms. Water quality in the canal is determined by Delta quality. (U.S. Bureau of Reclamation photo)

"WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE, NOR ANY DROP TO DRINK"

Susan Watson

This woeful lament of the Ancient Mariner reminds us that fresh water - not oil, not gold - is the most precious substance on earth. With it nations flourish; without it nations and whole civilizations decline.

Park Council News has run a series of articles on the Peripheral Canal. At issue is the quality of the water in the Delta and, as a flushing action, the quality of the San Francisco Bay itself. At stake is the quality of life of all the people and enterprises surrounding the systems of the Delta and the Bay - whether that life will flourish or wither.

This dry year focuses problems even more sharply. The Federal Bureau of Reclamation has promised San

integrity of the Delta will be preserved if the water quality at that intake can be maintained. The Peripheral Canal, with other hands on the tap, would seriously affect that goal. The canal is not the only problem of the Delta and the Bay, but it can be likened to the lid of the coffin for which many nails have already been, and still are being, forged.

The Delta, the confluence of the two great interior water systems of Northern California, is like a permeable membrane. For eons, migrations of fish, bringing in their bodies the minerals of the water from a thousand miles of the Pacific Ocean, fought their way up these systems to spawn and die, their bodies washing down in flood to fertilize the plain. For eons, too, the flood waters from the winter snows fed the tules that created the rich peat and flushed

the systems and the Bay. Old-timers will recall that the C & H sugar plant at Crockett was built there early in the century to take advantage of the fresh water.

But all this is changed. And not all has been for the worse, by a long shot. Flood control, stored water, and irrigation have all helped our lives and our many enterprises to flourish. But "to flourish" must be the purpose. Some years ago on a tour of Brown's Island off Pittsburg, I had a conversation with a biologist in which he described some of the remarkable life of that island. Turning grim, he stated that if the rivers could not continue their flushing action, "the Bay would smell to Elko, Nevada." That's a long way, but not far enough. It will reach Sacramento, all right, but it should reach Washington, D.C.

WHAT YOU CAN DO. This is an election year - make it count. Make the integrity of the Delta and our water systems an election issue with the candidates at all levels. Write to your senators and congressmen, to the Bureau of Reclamation, to the governor and the State Department of Water Resources. Tell them that in this year of "fiscal conservancy" and "integrity" you insist upon water systems conservancy and the integrity of the Delta. To oversell our water will function only to undercut themselves - all of us.

ANZA EXPLORATION TO BE REENACTED IN COUNTY

WANTED: Ten Spanish soldados, tried and true.

That's the word going out to local horsemen groups from the Contra Costa County Bicentennial Committee, which is seeking hardy riders and their mounts to reenact a 3-day journey of Juan Bautista de Anza, Mexican explorer and colonizer who trod this ground in 1776.

The reenactment is scheduled to commence at the El Cerrito Plaza on April 1st and will follow the northern perimeter of the County to Antioch, where the party will turn south, along the eastern foot of Mt. Diablo, to Livermore. Bicentennial Committee Chairman Roy Bloss, Alamo, explained that the retracing of the explorer's steps is part of a multi-state, international historical observance which commenced in Tubac, Mexico, last October 15th. Mounted relays of horsemen have since been proceeding to northern California.

What historians call the Anza Expedition was set afoot in 1776 by the Viceroy of Mexico, Don Antonio Maria Bucareli, to forestall the southward march of Russian colonizers who had menacingly reached down the Pacific shore with a settlement at Ft. Ross. Anza, who had made a preliminary exploration of southern California in 1774, was chosen to recruit and lead a colony of 240 people--men, women and children--and 1,000 animals over a tortuous desert and mountain trail to an unspecified site in northern California. Several members of the party died on the trail and many of the cattle succumbed from lack of water. Three babies were born along the route.

Ruth Galindo, Concord, vice chairman of the County Bicentennial Committee and a charter member of the Contra Costa and Concord historical societies, is a descendant of one of the soldiers in Anza's military escort.

The reenactment will consist of 20 persons who will take the roles of Lt. Col. Anza; Lt. Jose Moraga; Father Pedro Font, Franciscan priest and chaplain diarist; and 10 soldiers with servants and muleteers. All will be decked out in costumes of 200 years ago.

Anza's purpose in the East Bay exploration was to scout possible sites for a mission and to find a crossing to the north shore of San Francisco Bay, a goal in which he failed, like the area's first explorer, Lt. Pedro Fages, four years earlier.

The modern Anza, yet to be selected, will ride on an elaborate, hand-carved, medallion-decorated mochila--a leather saddle-cover with message pockets--which was designed and tooled by Marcia Beat, Danville. The mochila has been relayed from rider to rider all the way from Tubac, Mexico. It is destined to be presented to President Ford at Valley Forge, PA, July 4th, by the last rider of a transcontinental horse relay, a subsequent national Bicentennial event of which George Cardinet is national coordinator.

Watch for celebrations at Rodeo Creek Camp on April 1, Pacheco on April 2, and Antioch on April 3.

BLACKHAWK FILES SUIT AGAINST OPPONENTS

Acknowledgments to Joan Jackson, Tri-Valley News

Blackhawk Development Company bounded back into public view early in March with a lawsuit filed against Linda Moody and Sally Ewing. Moody and Ewing, both San Ramon Valley residents, have spearheaded the drive to halt Blackhawk's 4800-acre development project at the base of Mt. Diablo.

The suit, filed in Contra Costa County Superior Court, alleges four causes of action against Moody, Ewing, and 250 "Does." All four causes are based on the referendum drive launched last summer to place the Blackhawk boundary reorganization on the ballot. Blackhawk's suit lists the alleged causes as:

1. Defamation and libel.
2. Intentional publication of false material in regard to the referendum petitions.
3. Intentional misrepresentations and false statements in regard to the referendum petition.
4. Slander.

Blackhawk is asking for judgment against the defendants for general damages and punitive and exemplary damages in unspecified amounts. It is also asking for costs of the suit and special damages in the sum of $35,846.

Countering allegations in the referendum petition materials, the suit says the development will not be built on the slopes of Mt. Diablo, does not threaten the mountain, is not a high-density urban community, will not scar the mountain, will not require public subsidies, and will not destroy the view from the mountain.

The suit notes that Blackhawk has invested more than $7.5 million in the project and that each month of delay is costing the company $60,000. It alleges that the defendants knew the statements and materials they were circulating were false but persisted in their efforts with the purpose of harassing the developer, halting the project, damaging the company's reputation, and causing financial damages.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

You're welcome to join the Sierra Club Regional Group hikes. Bring sustenance and liquids. Call Neil Southwick, Outings Chairman, 939-7334, for more info.

Mar. 13, Sat. Moonlight ramble on Ridge Trail, REDWOOD REG. PARK, with Jeannie Harmon; 2B; start 7:30 p.m. at Skyline Gate.

Mar. 20, Sat. Follow Neil Southwick on a vigorous 3C around MT. DIABLO and down to the beautiful waterfalls. Experienced hikers only. Stout shoes. Start 9 a.m. Juniper parking lot, or carpool from Walnut Creek BART station 8:15 a.m.

Mar. 27, Sat. SHELL RIDGE ramble. Join Vern and Pam Carrier on an easy 1B hike; beautiful views, lovely terrain, fantastic wildflowers. Families welcome. Start 10 a.m. at Indian Valley School. Directions: Walnut Creek's Ygnacio Valley Road, east to Holmstead Ave. Right turn; then first left is Marshall Dr. Go all the way out on Marshall Dr. to Indian Valley School. Reservations required, so call 939-2452 before Mar. 21.

Apr. 4, Sun. BRIONES REG. PARK. Join Carl Schwarzer on a 2B wildflower hike. Start 9:30 a.m. at Bear Creek Rd. parking lot, or carpool from Walnut Creek BART station 9 a.m.

Apr. 10, Sat. SUNOL REG. PARK. Follow Tania Selden on a 2B. Start 9:30 a.m. from park headquarters, or carpool from Walnut Creek BART station 8:45. Before the hike, Margaret Tracy will talk about the Apperson Guest Ranch proposal. You will be able to view the site during the hike.

Apr. 25, Sun. MORGAN TERRITORY. See news story for idea of pleasures in store. Meet Harry Reeves on Main St., Clayton, 9:30 a.m., or carpool from Walnut Creek BART station 9 a.m. Vigorous 2B. Lunch and liquids.

Subsequent hikes: Call Neil Southwick at 939-7334.

BILL MOTT RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

William Penn Mott, Jr., received the Department of the Interior's Outdoor Recreation Achievement Award on March 2 in recognition of his achievements as director of the California Department of Parks and Recreation from 1967 to 1975. His accomplishments during that period include formation of the California State Parks Foundation and citizens advisory committees, installation of a computerized reservation system for campgrounds and the Hearst Castle, and service as the state liaison officer for the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

A resident of Orinda, Mott is president of the California State Parks and Recreation Foundation, a director of the Moraga Park and Recreation Authority, and a long-time member of the Park Council.

PETALUMA CHALKS UP VICTORY FOR GROWTH CONTROL

The U.S. Supreme Court decided in February not to review an appeals court decision upholding a controversial restriction on housing growth in Petaluma. This decision sustains a ruling by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, which last year reversed a District Court ruling against the building limit.

Attorneys for the town said the plan was "an effort by a relatively small community to manage its anticipated residential growth in a reasonable, well balanced, non-chaotic manner." Opponents in the construction industry differed, saying that the appeals court ruling "will worsen the housing situation in this country by encouraging municipalities to severely restrict new residential construction whenever they encounter real or imagined difficulties in accommodating population growth."

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Editor: Patrick Whittle.
Associate Editor: Judy Whittle.

Contra Costa Park Council
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Park Council News

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UNDER THE PRESIDENT'S BYLINE

Susan Watson

DEAR HEARTS AND GENTLE READERS - The season is summer. This issue will tell you where the fish are jumpin' and where the trails are goin' right here in the county.

There are so many recreational experiences to be found here - from a mountain and a wilderness park to community lakes, ballfields, and tot lots - that summer vacations don't have to be those two weeks far away. They can be here, and all summer long. What's more - summer experiences can extend all year; most activities are open the year around.

Although there are 21 golf courses and several excellent private recreational areas in the county, we are going to concentrate our small space on public park facilities. After all, many of these areas came into being because of the activities of the Council and its affiliates over the last 24 years. With our limited space, we can only list facilities and give brief descriptions. Please call the pertinent agencies for more information. You are going to be pleasantly surprised to see how much is available to you in many varied activities.

THE DIRECTORS OF THE PARK COUNCIL met at the end of April in our quarterly meeting and reviewed the status of North Peak and the Pt. Pinole Land Use Development Plan, discussed the problems of several projects which may affect the Delta and our shoreline parks, and took note of the PARC Ridgelands study.

This exciting new study involves three counties, our own, Alameda, and Santa Clara, plus the Regional Park District, ABAG, and the Federal Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. A citizens advisory group is also working with the professional planners. The study is to identify open space lands and values and to develop a multijurisdictional action plan to implement means "to protect and preserve the open space values of the study area." We shall be looking forward to these reports.

MR. HARLAN KESSEL of Oakland was appointed to the unfinished term of Director Clyde Woolridge, who resigned April 1st from the East Bay Regional Park District. Mr. Kessel has a long conservation background. He works for the University of California Press, which publishes that fine series on the Bay Area natural environment. His appointment is a splendid addition to the Board of the District. Congratulations, Mr. Kessel, and thank you, Mr. Woolridge, for many years of dedicated public service on the Board.

MORGAN TERRITORY, AGAIN

The Park Council is seeking to develop with the East Bay Regional Park District policies on fire roads and landbanks that are protective of natural areas and aesthetics, as well as of public safety. The blading of several fire and service roads on the beautiful Smith property of Morgan Territory has been done in a manner which the Park Council believes is incompatible with this land bank's future status as a Scenic Preserve. The Council has written to the Board of Directors, and representatives have met with members of the staff of the District and members of the Park Advisory Committee. This is a complex problem, but its solution, we trust, will help develop policies for greater protection of our lands.

ON A RAINY DAY IN APRIL, a band of old friends of Mary Rogers Smith made their way through Las Trampas Wilderness Park to the Base of Vail (Eagle) Peak in order to place a small brass plate in a magnificent grove of madrones. Mrs. Smith died a year ago this spring. Permission to place the plate and to dedicate the grove to Mrs. Smith's

memory was granted by the Board of Directors of the District to Darlene Blair of the Eugene O'Neill Foundation, who had sought this way to honor one of the original founders of the Las Trampas Wilderness Society.

Another good friend of Las Trampas, Charlotte Morrison, died in April of this year. She, too, worked with the Las Trampas Wilderness Society and was a founder of the Eugene O'Neill Society, later the Foundation. Miss Morrison accomplished much toward the preservation of Tao House. Donations in her memory may be sent to The Eugene O'Neill Foundation, P.O. Box 402, Danville 94526.

THREE COMPANION GUIDES TO HIKING AND RECREATION

We recommend heartily to you the following publications which are now available:

1. A SURVIVAL HANDBOOK TO SIERRA FLORA, Norman F. Weeden, 1975 ($5.95 plus tax). It doesn't take much thought to know that things that come in big packages are not necessarily useful and things that come in small packages are not necessarily efficient - especially when you are hiking. We who love the native flora of our State - from shrinking violets to arboreal giants - have long looked for the "complete" guide that is also manageable in size.

Here is, at last, the Just Right Field Guide! A SURVIVAL HANDBOOK TO SIERRA FLORA, by Norman F. Weeden, is a book that will delight the rank amateur and the experienced botanist. In this pocket-sized volume (4½" x 6" x 3/4" - 10 oz.), field identification by means of a logical and easily learned dichotomous key is presented and explained. Then, families are listed alphabetically with their genera accompanied by marvelous explicit line drawings at each heading.

The survival part of the title refers to the author's noting the edible possibilities of each genus. Mr. Weeden is quick to note that "cases of starvation in the Sierra are very rare today" and emphasizes the pure, scientific interest of the subject; however for you inveterate leaf-tasters, this information is a must. It's nice to know whether you can digest the sample or it can digest you!

Although this excellent little volume is written for the Sierra Nevada flora, many of the plants or similar ones exist here, so that the use of the book is broader than its title. This is a Just Right gift for the hiker or backpacker or even for the Armchair Enthusiast. It is available from many Bay Area bookstores or from the author at 3571 F Street, Eureka, CA 95501. The author notes that he will pay postage on prepaid orders or ship COD.

2. The East Bay Municipal Utility District's beautifully illustrated foldout guide to the District's hiking trails, written and designed by Malcolm Margolin, is the best guide of its type that we have seen. One side is a map of the District's watershed lands with the trails carefully charted. The fold-over allows the descriptive text of the Northern trails to coincide with the north section map and the southern text with the south section. Simple - yes; accurate, informative, a little joy for hikers and horsemen. Available at Lafayette Reservoir, San Pablo Reservoir, or District headquarters at no charge.

3. HERE'S DIABLO LIVING is a new monthly magazine for central county residents. Written by Jack Pyle of Here's Publications, HERE'S DIABLO LIVING is supported by advertising by local businessmen and is available to readers at no cost. The first issue is coming out this June and will contain a thorough guide to the nearly 40 central city parks. July's issue will comment on the Regional Parks and Reservoirs. This is definitely a recommendation for our central county readers who want to know "What's happening, where to go, where to shop, where to play."

ALEXANDER LINDSAY JUNIOR MUSEUM NEEDS RESCUE WORKERS

Spring nests are full of eggs which hatch to summer fledglings. Small animal dens house furry little ones. Unfortunately, many of these young ones become orphaned - lost, strayed, or stolen. The Museum raises these orphans that come with increasing rapidity as the days grow longer. Can you help raise some of these little ones in your home and give them the attention they need until they can fend for themselves? Contact the Museum at 935-1978 to offer help. The Museum also needs "layette" materials: old flannels, towels, wash cloths. If you have neither time nor materials, how about some money? Visit the Museum this summer to see the dedicated workers and their young charges along with the furred and feathered permanent residents.

A CONTRA COSTAN'S GUIDE TO COUNTY AND CITY RECREATION

WEST COUNTY

EL CERRITO. Eleven city parks grace this residential town, as well as Pt. Isobel Regional Shoreline and Wildcat Regional Park in the hills. Tennis and volleyball courts, playground equipment, barbecues, tot lots, turfed areas, shuffleboard, and horseshoe pits are some of the activities available. Canyon Trail Park has a nature trail and a fort. The community center has three swimming pools. During summer, playground directors will be available every weekday afternoon. Call the El Cerrito Park Department at 234-1445 for more information.

RICHMOND. The City of Richmond boasts ten community and neighborhood centers, three ballfields, five baseball diamonds, numerous softball diamonds, and twenty city parks! Keller's Beach (which will be a part of George Miller Jr. Shoreline Park) is on Pt. Richmond, and Point Molate Beach Park to the north of the San Rafael Bridge has a long, sweeping curve of beach. There are two city plunges, a boat ramp, and eighteen play lots. From Alvarado Park the walker can proceed up the road to Wildcat Regional Park and on to Tilden

Park and the National Skyline Recreation Trail. Brooks Island Preserve (now closed to the public) lies off the shore. Citizens of Richmond are offered day camps and excursions. Call the Recreation and Parks Department for information, 232-1212, extension 496.

PINOLE. Mr. Robert E. Lee is the new appointee to the post of City Director of Parks and Recreation. Fernandez Park has ball fields and barbecue pits; Meadow Park is a neighborhood park with a tot lot; Ellerhorst Park has a ballfield. There will be a summer program starting at the end of June. Call 758-4332 for information. To the west of Pinole lies Pt. Pinole Regional Park, 480 acres of serenity on San Pablo Bay. Go there for bird watching, beachcombing, fishing, and picnicking. Access is by way of Atlas Road off San Pablo Avenue.

SAN PABLO. County Service Area M-17 is developing an eight acre park in Montalvin Manor and a three acre ballpark. Information from the County Service Area coordinator, Jim Fears at 372-2102.

EL SOBRANTE's County Service Area R-9 is developing a community center. Call Jim Fears at 372-2102. Kennedy Grove in the Regional Park system is a "rent-a-park". The beautiful grove of eucalyptus at the base of San Pablo Dam is available by reservation and fees for family sized outings or large groups. Call the East Bay Regional Park District at 531-9043 for reservations.

CENTRAL COUNTY

ORINDA. Wending our way southeast on San Pablo Dam road past San Pablo Reservoir and Briones Dam (more about them later), we come to Orinda's new Community Center and three acre Park (County Service Area R-6), located at the historic building which was formerly the Orinda School. According to Ann Christofferson, the supervisor, there is a tot lot, three tennis courts, and a tree shaded picnic area. A tree house for older children is being built. A year-around full recreation program for all ages is offered, the summer session beginning June 21st. Also, a pre-school "Tiny Trees" day camp is beginning. Call 254-2445 for more information.

MORAGA. The charming Hacienda de las Flores, 2100 Donald Drive, the former Rheem Estate, serves as Moraga's Community Center, with summer classes beginning June 21st. Many imaginative "camps" are also provided: a children's arts and crafts, a kitchen camp for kids, a rookie camp for baseball and soccer, and two music camps with festivals following. A combined Orinda-Moraga endeavor is a youth summer theatrical program, MYST. Call 372-2520 for details. A firm supporter of the Park Council, William Penn Mott (also known to us as the former Director of the State Park and Recreation Department) is now Moraga's Director. Moraga is at the south end of the Lafayette-Moraga Trail and only minutes away from the Valle Vista Staging Area for San Leandro Reservoir Watershed Trails. Trails from there connect with Redwood Park; turn north to go through Huckleberry Preserve, Sibley (Round Top) Preserve, and over the National Skyline Trail to Tilden Regional Park. Turn south at Redwood and go through Chabot Regional Park; connections with San Leandro watershed land near Castro Valley will take you (a long way around) back to Valle Vista! The "Utah Easement" is a short trail running north from Valle Vista through the hills.

LAFAYETTE is having a "Horse and Carriage Days" carnival from July 3-11 at the BART overflow lot. On July 4, the Celebration Opening of a 4½ mile portion of the Lafayette-Moraga Trail will take place. This trail is a joint undertaking with the EBRPD, beginning at Olympic Blvd. and Reliez Station Road and continuing to Bollinger Canyon Road. There will be a paved bicycle trail and graded horse and hiking trails.

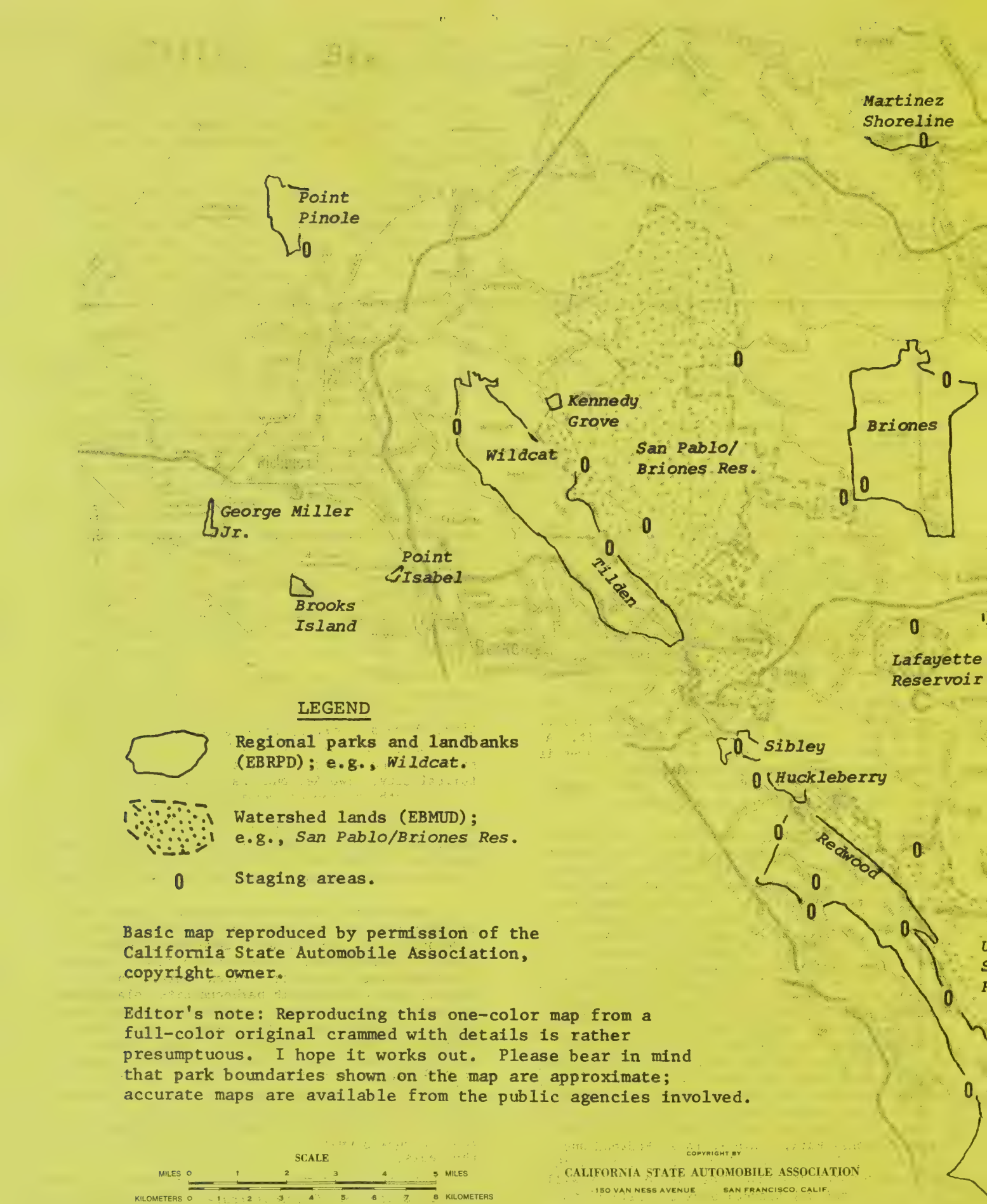
WALNUT CREEK. Civic Park is the center of the famous Walnut Festival held every year. It also has various programs and classes. Heather Farms Park is an 83 acre wonderland with clubhouse, a lake and fishing pond, swimming pool, ballfields, tennis courts, picnic areas, and an equestrian center. Four other parks grace Walnut Creek's system, including Larkey Park, where the Alexander Lindsay Jr. Museum is located. The city also passed an open space bond issue a few years ago and is now buying hill and ridge land. Here is an active and environmentally aware city! Call Leisure Services at 935-3300, Ext. 245.

PLEASANT HILL has twenty recreation and park land facilities. A call to Center Director Tom Hale at 676-5200 will give you information on the many programs - swimming, tennis, community gardening, Pop Warner football, senior citizen and teen excursions, and many more. Many classes are held at the Community Center on Civic Drive - care to learn belly dancing, ballet or ballroom dancing? Lovely, open Paso Nogal Park is now 62 acres, and trails are being developed. Briones Regional Park lies to the west, and trail access is being worked out with EBRPD. Around the north corner near Martinez is the northern entrance to Briones Regional Park. Many fine trails are available from this location.

MARTINEZ. Eight neighborhood parks and three community parks (Municipal Park has 41 acres!) are in the city of Martinez, our county seat. In addition, there are open space areas adjacent to subdivisions, John Muir National Historic Site, and a marina on the strait. Quite a list for this historical city! Two Regional Parks are near, Briones to the south and the new Regional Shoreline right in town by the marina and the horsemen's facility. The Shoreline is a tribute to the many local residents who believed in nature's bounty and their own hard work. Visit the Shoreline for a fascinating experience this summer. Call 228-4400 for programs.

CONCORD has seventeen parks with a great range of activities and varieties of land, some of considerable size, such as newly developing Newhall Community Park of nearly one hundred acres. Recreation buildings, a senior citizen center, ballfields, picnic areas with barbecue pits, playground equipment, horseshoe pits, tennis courts and hiking trails are available in other parks. Willow Pass Community Park has a train ride! Ponds, creeks, and fishing lakes can be found. Direct your calls to Parks Department, 671-3165. For a nostalgic glimpse of traditional Americana, visit Todo Santos Park, 2½ acres in the center of the city - the typical town center of so many older American cities and a planning design that retains its value over the years.

This is page 3. Overleaf (pages 4-5) is a map of regional parks, landbanks, and EBMUD watershed lands in Contra Costa County. Story continues on page 6.



LEGEND

Regional parks and landbanks (EBRPD); e.g., *Wildcat.*

Watershed lands (EBMUD); e.g., *San Pablo/Briones Res.*

Staging areas.

Basic map reproduced by permission of the California State Automobile Association, copyright owner.

Editor's note: Reproducing this one-color map from a full-color original crammed with details is rather presumptuous. I hope it works out. Please bear in mind that park boundaries shown on the map are approximate; accurate maps are available from the public agencies involved.

SCALE

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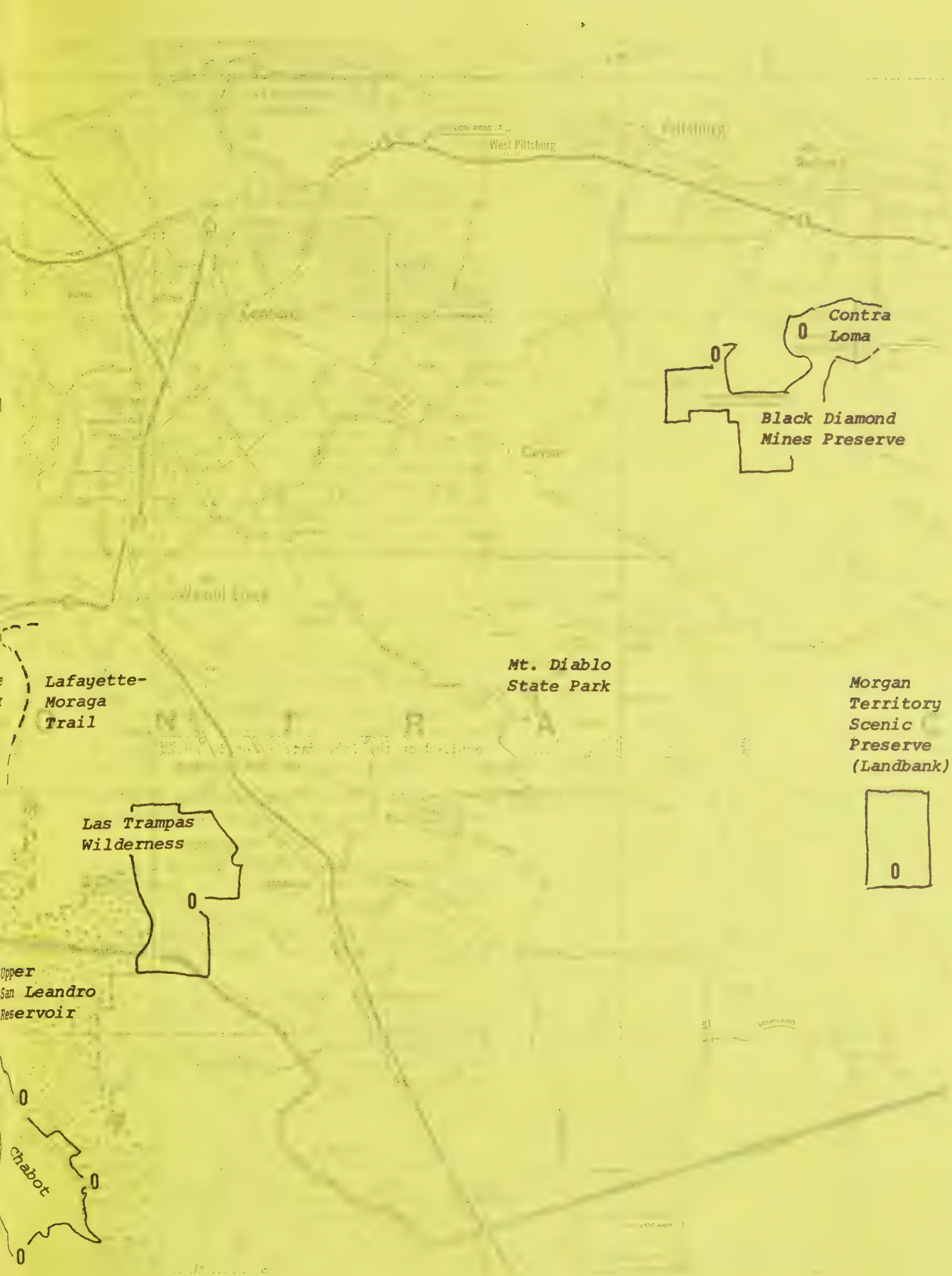
West Pittsburg
Contra Loma
Black Diamond Mines Preserve
Lafayette-Moraga Trail
Mt. Diablo State Park
Morgan Territory Scenic Preserve (Landbank)
Las Trampas Wilderness
Upper San Leandro Reservoir
Chabot

SAN RAMON VALLEY. A journey south lets us discover the newly formed Service Area R-7, which is working hard to buy land for community parks. Three environmental playgrounds - ropes, bridges, climbing apparatus - have been developed in cooperation with the school districts. Out of Diablo is the scenic south entrance to Mt. Diablo State Park and out of San Ramon by way of Crow Canyon and Bollinger Canyon is the major staging area of Las Trampas Wilderness Park and another entrance to the San Leandro watershed trails. To inquire about Service Area R-7 call Jim Fears at 372-2102.

EAST COUNTY

CLAYTON now has an access to Mt. Diablo State Park by way of Mitchell Canyon Trail and may have a second one through botanically magnificent Donner Canyon soon. Narrow Black Diamond Road to the northeast leads us to the western edge of Black Diamond Historic Preserve. Almost equally narrow (and very scenic) Morgan Territory Road takes us south to the new Morgan Territory Scenic Preserve (now in landbank status) at the highest point of the road. Both this property and parts of Black Diamond are open to the public by permission only-call EBRPD at 531-9300, ask for June Miller.

ANTIOCH has Black Diamond Preserve in its "back yard", so to speak. The Somersville Road leads to the remains of the villages of Somersville and Nortonville and the Rose Park Cemetery. To the east is Contra Loma Regional Recreation Area with its lake and many facilities. Antioch has two bond issues on its ballot this June for acquiring a river park and developing a community park. Ballfields are available, as well as a recreation program. Call Park Department at 757-2271 or Recreation Department at 757-0900.

DELTA. Far, far out to the east - beyond our map's borders - lies the hauntingly beautiful State Park, Frank's Tract. This delta island, mainly submerged, is the winter home of migratory fowl, the birth place of millions of bass and other fish, and the residence of many small mammals. Botanically, it is a mix of natives and exotics in astounding array. Access is difficult; go by way of Jersey Island or by boat. Best of all, go in a group through a recognized hiking club or nature society.

THIS HAS BEEN A QUICK TRIP through the cities of our county, with glimpses of the Regional and State Parks and the EBMUD watershed lands. For stories on them, read on.

EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

Sixteen parks and landbanks exist now in the county under the jurisdiction of the District. They cover a wide range of lands and have many varied activities. Each, in its own way, conforms to the purpose of the District stated in the Master Plan "to conserve these lands for use in making the outdoor environment available in diverse ways for the enjoyment and education of the general public". We have identified these lands geographically in relation to the cities, but now let us consider the recreational activities.

HIKING - Every park, with the exception of some of the shoreline parks, has good trails. Local maps are available from the District (11500 Skyline Blvd, Oakland 94619, 531-9300) and from individual parks. Parks like Las Trampas connect with East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) watershed trails, so that extended trips are possible now. The Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail opens in July for bicycling, horseback, and hiking.

BOTANIC - Nature Trails - The Botanic Garden in Tilden Park simulates a 1,000 mile walk through California. Huckleberry Preserve is a natural area botanically unique and rich in plants from the distant past. Here is a relatively short walk in the Oakland hills near the top of Park Boulevard. The Tilden Park Jewel Lake Trail supplements the information at the Environmental Education Center. Devil's Hole, the southern part of Las Trampas, has many rare plants.

EQUESTRIAN - "Any trail for hikers is for horses" is the general rule. Exceptions are formal nature trails and a few hikers trails inadequate for horses, and these trails are always noted. Park District naturalists offer a "Nature Ride" at 10 a.m. every Friday. Horse rental is $8.00; reservations at 525-2233. Chabot Equestrian Center has rental horses at $4.50 an hour. Privately owned stables, Buckeye Ranch in Lafayette, and Las Trampas Stables at San Ramon, have good access to park trails. The District maintains a hunt field, open to all, in Redwood Regional Park on Skyline Blvd.

ARCHERY - Briones, Redwood, and Tilden Regional Parks have archery ranges.

BEACHCOMBING - George Miller Jr. Shoreline Park at Pt. Richmond, Pt. Isobel at El Cerrito, Pt. Pinole, and the Martinez Waterfront.

FISHING - All of the above, plus Contra Loma and Anthony Chabot. A $3.00 Lake Access Permit is required at the lake facilities in addition to a State fishing license for those sixteen and above.

SWIMMING - Contra Loma, Lake Anza at Tilden Park, Kellers Beach (now part of the Richmond park parks).

CAMPING - Briones, Chabot, Kennedy Grove, Redwood, Tilden, Wildcat. Reservations needed. Call 531-9043.

PICNICKING - All parks. For groups more than fifty or for Kennedy Grove call for reservations at 531-9043.

BIRDWATCHING - Early bird walks from 7 to 9 a.m. every Wednesday. Call the Environmental Education Center at 525-2233. The Center has exhibits and programs all summer. All parks have resident species and summer visitors of birds that can be readily identified.

THIS LIST HARDLY TOUCHES what is available at our Regional Parks. More information is available at the District office (531-9300) or the Environmental Education Center (525-2233). Get to know some of your Regional Parks this summer.

MT. DIABLO STATE PARK

Two automobile entrances - one from Northgate Road in Walnut Creek and one from the community of Diablo - make this great mountain accessible to all. The entrance fee is $1.50 per car, and the park is closed to entrance at night. The summit building has geological exhibits, and on Sundays a ranger will point out the incredible views from the "Mt. Diablo Meridian". Every Saturday morning, from Curry Point, a ranger will lead a hike emphasizing the history and natural environment of this extraordinary mountain. Many sites for camping for groups and families are available. For families, it is "first come, first served". Cost is $4.00 per night per site,which accomodates eight. For group reservations, go to Ticketron at Sears in Sun Valley Mall. Many trails exist for horsemen and hikers, and many bicyclists find the park road challenging. Recently, two additions from parts of the historic Howard Ranch at Marsh Creek Road and Morgan Territory Road were bought by the State with Save Mt. Diablo participating. These beautiful lands will be open for public use soon. Call the administrative office for more information, 939-2059.

EAST BAY MUNICIPAL UTILITY DISTRICT

THE EAST BAY MUNICIPAL UTILITY DISTRICT was created by the citizens of the East Bay in 1923 to insure delivery of adequate water to homes and industries. Practically all the water comes from the Mokelumne River, and that which is not put into immediate use is stored in the five reservoirs: San Pablo, Briones, Lafayette, Upper San Leandro, and Chabot. The watershed lands surrounding these reservoirs total some 27,000 acres. This land is primarily for protection of the water supply. In recent years, the District has been opening the land to hikers and horsemen for trails, and the lakes for recreational use. Also several thousand acres are set aside for educational lands for natural systems studies by schools in the East Bay.

These are the purposes which must be kept in mind when we use the watershed lands for trails - sanitation and protection first. Whereas park land is for "people use" - now and in the future - watershed land is for safe and plentiful water.

Lafayette Reservoir trails are open for use without permit, but the "backcountry" requires special permits. No swimming or other body contact with the water in any of the reservoirs is permitted, but boating and fishing are allowed at several. Permits for hikers and horsemen are available at Lafayette and San Pablo Recreation Areas, as well as any EBMUD business office. There is a nominal charge of $1 for one year and $2 for three years for regular permits (holder and family members and up to three guests) and for Trail Leader permits (holder and up to thirty people). Trail Leader permits must also be certified - consult EBMUD for details. Observe the rules carefully - remember, this is the water that you will be drinking one day!

The reservoirs attract much bird life, especially water and marsh birds. The water also supports mammal life, so that many herds of deer can be seen. Sharp eyes will detect the trails of more reticent animals! The beauty of these lakes with their leafy coves and glistening surfaces is apparent not only to the back country walker but also to the sailor and the fisherman - both the meditative stroller and the active recreationalist will find these reservoirs to his liking!

LAFAYETTE RESERVOIR is open without trails permit. There is a $1 charge for parking. Rowboats may be rented, and privately owned sailboats and canoes are allowed with fee. Fishing is free, but a valid State fishing license is required. There is a combined hikers and bicycle paved 2.7 mile trail around the lake. Picnic facilities are readily available. The Ridge Trail is 4.7 miles, and the hiker will enjoy spectacular views. Horses are not allowed here. In late June, a Native Plants Trail will be opening, and a new Group Use Area is to open for this summer. Information: 284-9669.

SAN PABLO RESERVOIR. There is no water related recreation here, but trails surround this deep and serene body of water. The Oursan Trail to the north climbs Sobrante and Oursan Ridges, meets the Hampton Trail intersection, then continues to the Bear Creek Staging Area. On the south side of the lake, the Bear Creek Trail wanders close to the lake through thick woods to the dam. The Hampton Trail - short: 1.8 miles - is from the Staging Area on Pinole Valley Road at Bear Creek Road to the Oursan Trail.

UPPER SAN LEANDRO RESERVOIR is also closed to water related recreation. This long, narrow reservoir with many inlets seems miles away from the suburbs surrounding it. Valle Vista Staging Area is just west of Moraga. From it, trails go west to Redwood Park, south along the water, and east over the ridges of the huge open area that culminate at Rocky Ridge, stark with its wind caves and exposed sandstone. Chabot Staging Area is at Redwood and Miller Creek Roads near Castro Valley. A long, overland trail wanders eastward toward Ramage Peak and on to Rocky Ridge through hidden valleys and open ridges. Remains of old homesteads are found in these lands - a few ancient, overgrown fruit trees, a eucalyptus grove, perhaps a spring, all remembrances of times gone by.

CHABOT RESERVOIR. Although Chabot is in Alameda County and the recreational facilities are run by the East Bay Regional Park District, it is an EBMUD reservoir. It was built in 1875, the oldest by far of the reservoirs. Fishing, boating, walking, riding, and nearby camping are available. Call EBRPD for information: 531-9300.

EBMUD also maintains recreation lands at Comanche and Pardee Reservoirs in the Mother Lode, but the five reservoirs listed are right here, available to us all the time! For more information call the individual recreation offices listed above or Public Information, EBMUD office: 835-3000

AND HAVE A HEALTHY AND HAPPY SUMMER!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

HIKING SCHEDULE

Mt. Diablo Regional Group of the Sierra Club invites everyone to join them on summer hikes. For more information call Otto Haubensak, 939-8608.

June 26, Sat. - Hiking. LAS TRAMPAS, DEVIL'S HOLE with Ron Mueller. A 2B hike. Meet 9 a.m. at Bollinger Canyon parking lot.

June 27, Sun. - Bicycling. DANVILLE-PLEASANTON trip with Carl Schwarzer on a moderate 35 mile trip. Meet at Bank of America parking lot 9:30 a.m. in Danville.

July 10, Sat. - Hiking. BRIONES REG. PARK with Betty and Joe Goldstein. A 2B hike. Meet 9:30 a.m. at Reliez Valley Road and Alhambra in Martinez.

July 24, Sat. - Hiking. LAS TRAMPAS - Buckhorn Creek Loop with Otto Haubensak. A strenuous 3B for experienced hikers. Meet at Bollinger Canyon parking lot at 8 a.m.

August 7, Sat. Evening - Moonlight hike. BRIONES REG. PARK by moonlight with Rich Sexton. A 9 mile loop - reservations required (757-6991).

August 15, Sat. - Nature hike. BRIONES REG. PARK with Carl Schwarzer on 2B hike to observe plant and animal life. Briones parking lot at Bear Creek 9:30 a.m.

LATE NEWS--LATE NEWS--LATE NEWS

As we go to press, EBRPD announces important news regarding Briones Reg. Park and Las Trampas Reg. Wilderness. At Briones, the District has taken actions that may add 430 acres, including 13,000 ft of scenic ridgelands, to that spectacular park. The property, owned by Panorama Ranch, Inc., is under option to EBRPD for a purchase price of $247,250, or $575 an acre. EBRPD's option also includes a 2000-ft easement for an access corridor across Buckeye Ranch to give direct hiking and riding access from Lafayette.

At Las Trampas, the District is acquiring the 650-acre Little Hills Ranch in Bollinger Canyon for $790,851. The property, which includes a swimming pool, stables, pavilions, and picnic areas, will add 550 acres to the Regional Wilderness for a total of more than 3000 acres. The remaining 100 acres of the purchase will be used for a regional rec. area.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Park Council extends its warmest appreciation to the people who supplied the information for this newsletter: Jack Pyle of Here's Publications, Grace Lewis of the East Bay Regional Park District, Brian McCrae of the East Bay Municipal Utility District, Jim Fears of Contra Costa County Public Works, Lucretia Edwards of Richmond, personnel of the county service districts, city park and recreation departments, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, and the California State Automobile Association.

The editor extends his personal thanks to Sue Watson, Park Council president, who master-minded this special recreation issue and did much legwork, and to Judy Whittle and Laura Chimenti of Patrick Whittle Advertising for their editing and repro-typing.

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Editor: Patrick Whittle.
Associate Editor: Judy Whittle.

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25TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

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Park Council News

THE PARK COUNCIL WILL CELEBRATE ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY ON NOVEMBER 15, 1976. This issue is affectionately dedicated to the founders, Alvin and Mary Burton - whose leadership, vision, and ceaseless work during a quarter century have made this county a better and finer place to live - and to all others who saw this vision and in so many ways helped it to become real.

THE STORY OF THE PARK COUNCIL

Alvin A. Burton

Back before the freeways, when Walnut Creek was still a town, there was a little group of volunteers calling themselves the Walnut Creek Recreation Council. At one of their meetings they entertained a panel of Contra Costa County officials to find out what the county was doing to provide parks. They learned that parks were not considered a county responsibility. To rectify this situation, a meeting held in Orinda on November 15, 1951, brought forth the county-wide Contra Costa Park and Recreation Council. The objective of the new organization was simple: to convince a county that parks are a county responsibility.

The Park Council recognized that its best approach was educating the public to the need for parks, particularly the big regional parks. A newsletter was started, soon attaining a circulation of well over a thousand. From Brentwood to Rodeo, every town of any consequence had a public meeting to discuss parks. Slides of potential park sites were shown and the park programs of other counties were described. A sound and color movie, "It's Up to You," was produced and widely shown. The county was criss-crossed with field trips, undertaken to discover the hidden places waiting to become parks. But the Park Council people were volunteers, not planners. To have authority, a professionally prepared park plan was needed. After considerable delay, the county hired an outside consultant for $8500 and a somewhat sketchy county park plan was produced.

A dramatic breakthrough came at a meeting held in Martinez in 1953. The late John Baldwin came in brandishing a newspaper with an article stating that EBMUD had declared a large section of land in Contra Costa surplus. The idea of creating a park from these lands was presented to the supervisors and they were receptive. This was the start of Briones Park. Urged on by the Park Council, the supervisors next formed the County Park Commission (now the Contra Costa Recreation and Natural Resources Commission). Further urging by both the Council and the Commission led to hiring "Doc" Mattison as the first County Park Director.

Under Doc's capable direction, an excellent park plan was drawn up and we came to grips with the problem of funding. Everyone worked hard to put over a bond issue, but a two-thirds vote was simply not attainable. Essentially the same plan was presented to the county a year later on a pay-as-you-go basis, but not enough money was budgeted for proper implementation of the plan. The following year, Mattison took the lead in encouraging the county to join the East Bay Regional Park District, although he knew that it would cost him his job. The annexation vote was successful, and the county park program thus had an assured source of funding and park-minded management.

Next in the series of milestones was the effort to obtain Las Trampas. The Park Council had long been aware of the rugged hills lying between Danville and Moraga, but the need to save other areas had always been more pressing. Subvention funds from the 1964 state park bonds were recognized as the key to Las Trampas. However, a much smaller site called Las Juntas near Pleasant Hill had gained political ascendency. Hearings were held before both the park

Contra Costa Park Council is a nonprofit organization incorporated under the laws of the State of California. The Council is dedicated to fostering the natural beauty of the county, preserving open space, and providing opportunity for healthful recreation. Contributions ($2 a year for students; $5 a year and up for individuals; $10 a year and up for organizations) are tax-deductible.

commission and the board of supervisors, with the commission and virtually all the speakers favoring Las Trampas. However, the county remained adamant - the money was to go to Las Juntas. After months of controversy, William Penn Mott, Manager of the EBRPD, took only five minutes to settle the matter. He simply stated that the Las Juntas site was not of regional park calibre and Las Trampas was preferable. With the addition of the Corduroy Hills Ranch and now the Little Hills Ranch, its 3111 acres are a wilderness paradise enjoyed by thousands.

The Park Council did what it could to help in the long and finally successful legal struggle to preserve the Black Diamond Mines area. With 2763 acres for hiking and nature study and the opportunity to explore the old mines, this will become one of our finest parks. When the bond issue failed, it was thought that Pt. Pinole was lost. However, some West County people never gave up and it is now an invaluable shoreline park. More recently, at the Park Council's suggestion, park bond money has been used to acquire Morgan Territory Regional Preserve. This remote, almost-untouched area is a land bank for future park needs of the county.

In recent years the Park Council was instrumental in encouraging the county to adopt a park dedication ordinance. This provision matches the ordinances, adopted by most cities, requiring builders to provide land or its equivalent cash value for local parks. Most recently, the Park Council has encouraged San Ramon Valley people to form a park service area. With the help of park dedication ordinance money, state park bond funds, and their own tax money, a desperately needed park system is being developed for their valley.

In the twenty-five years since that meeting in Orinda, many people have dedicated many hours to Park Council projects; but, looking over the accomplishments of the group, it certainly seems to have been time well spent.

EDITOR'S NOTE: In the last decade, public awareness of the need for local recreation had led to the creation of many county service areas. One of the first was the Moraga service area, now the Moraga Park and Recreation Authority, under the direction of the Park Council's long-time friend, William Penn Mott, Jr. Park Council News begins a series of articles on our county service areas with this story on Moraga's successful system.

MORAGA PARK AND RECREATION AUTHORITY

Claire Roth

The inception of a recreation agency for Moraga occurred in December 1970 when citizens of the community petitioned Contra Costa County for formation of the R-4 Service Area. Upon acceptance the County levied a 25¢ per $100 assessed valuation tax. In October 1973 the County and the Moraga School District signed a joint powers agreement creating the Moraga Park and Recreation Authority. Upon incorporation, the Town of Moraga became a signatory to the agreement.

In October 1973 the Authority purchased the Donald Rheem estate from the Christian Brothers. Renamed the Hacienda de las Flores, the 10 acre property includes the main house, which has been completely remodeled and serves as location for the many and varied classes offered by the Authority. The garage and caretaker's cottage have been remodeled into an art center. The Authority has enjoyed financial support for these projects from Moraga's active service groups. The grounds offer many specimen trees and large lawn areas where picnic tables have been provided.

Park dedication fees received by the Authority were used to purchase Rancho Laguna Park, an 8.5-acre site. As yet undeveloped, it is expected to provide open space in an area that can expect further development after adoption of Moraga's general plan.

With assistance from the Authority, the Moraga Junior Women's Club built "Climbing Country", a tot lot playground, and the Moraga Service League is constructing a parcourse jogging and exercise facility.

Funds from the State Bond Act of 1974 were pledged to the EBRPD for construction of the Lafayette-Moraga Trail. This 13½-mile hiking, biking, and equestrian trail offers safe passage through Moraga and Lafayette.

The Moraga Park and Recreation Foundation was formed this year with the purpose of fundraising for special programs and for land acquisition.

The Hacienda de las Flores is located at 2100 Donald Drive. For brochures detailing the recreation classes and for further information, please call 376-2520.

HOW MUCH IS A CREEK WORTH?

A creek is worth $500 according to a decision by Judge Gerald Belleci of the Delta-Pittsburg Justice Court, who fined Dow Chemical Co. for destroying a stream that feeds a freshwater marsh. This was the maximum fine that could be imposed for violation of a regulation that requires agreement of the California Fish and Game Department before a stream is altered.

Dow had diverted mile-long Kirker Creek and then bulldozed dirt into the stream bed. The work was done next to the existing plant in anticipation of a $500 million expansion of its petro-chemical complex. Dow wanted to plead nolo contendere, but finally pleaded guilty to the violation.

CORRECTION

Gremlins invaded our composing room and stole the copy for EBMUD's San Pablo Reservoir in our "Gala Summer Outings Issue".

Under San Pablo Reservoir, the description should read:

"The main recreation area is at the north end; sail boat and canoe launching area is at the south end. $1.00 fee for parking; boat rentals or private boats and canoes allowed with fee. There is a 5-mile trail along the west side of the lake; it is the Old

San Pablo Road, pleasant for bicycling and easy walking. A trail to Inspiration Point starts toward the south end, while Eagle's Nest Trail connects with Tilden Park from the north end. From the south end of Old San Pablo Road, the hiker or horseman can turn east toward Briones. Information 223-1661."

The title "Briones Reservoir" should be inserted in place of "San Pablo Reservoir." We sure hope you didn't get lost!

VOTE FOR PROPOSITION 2 ON NOVEMBER 2 - MORE PARKS FOR PEOPLE

The Nejedly-Hart State, Urban, and Coastal Park Bond Act of 1976 goes to the voters for approval at the general election in November.

Previous bond issues have made many parks and recreational facilities available to our county and all of the state in the past. The recent additions to Mt. Diablo State Park, some of the lands for regional parks, and many local facilities have been funded in this way.

California's population has doubled in the last 20 years, but our use of parks has multiplied 10 times. And no wonder, with beautiful land and beaches always available at little or no cost to the individual and funded by the fairest method: bond issues. Lands and beaches purchased, historical sites saved, camp sites built, boating facilities developed, local parks helped - all this is possible with a YES vote on PROPOSITION 2.

WE URGE YOU TO DO ALL YOU CAN TO MAKE SURE THAT PROPOSITION 2 PASSES IN NOVEMBER.

SAVE THIS DATE. On Friday, November 12, the Park Council will be having a no-host dinner at the Boundary Oak Restaurant, Walnut Creek. Cocktails at 6:30 p.m. Dinner 7:30. This event will be an informal get-together in honor of the Park Council's 25 years. There won't be any speeches; just good food and plenty of reminiscing. Call Al Burton at 934-5716 for details and reservations.

RESOURCE CONSERVATION REPORT NOW AVAILABLE

The 1975 Annual Report of the Contra Costa Resource Conservation District is hot off the presses. For a free copy, call the District at 687-1780 or stop by their office at 5552 Clayton Road, Concord. In the words of the Public Resources Code, the District's fundamental role is to promote "conservation practices... best adapted to save the basic resources--soil, water and air-- of the state from unreasonable and economically preventable waste and destruction."

EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT UPDATE

Grace Lewis

Striding toward realization of the ambitious goals set up in its master plan, EBRPD purchased and accepted gifts of parklands totaling more than 6,800 acres this summer to bring its total acreage to 41,250.

These new parks were created in Contra Costa County:

LITTLE HILLS REGIONAL RECREATION AREA - One-hundred acres of the 650-acre Little Hills Ranch in Bollinger Canyon Road, purchased for $790,851, will be developed to make up this recreation area. The other 550 acres go to Las Trampas Regional Wilderness.

CASTLE ROCK RECREATION AREA - Situated on the flanks of Mt. Diablo, near Walnut Creek, this 488-acre portion of Castle Rock Ranch was purchased for $925,000.

Also, a substantial addition was made to BRIONES through the purchase of 430-acre Panorama Ranch for $247,250. At GEORGE MILLER, JR., REGIONAL SHORELINE, Richmond, only about 3 acres of hill lands remain to be acquired; and at MARTINEZ WATERFRONT REGIONAL SHORELINE, 12.28 acres were bought for $139,700.

Newly created parks in Alameda county are: MISSION PEAK REGIONAL PRESERVE, Fremont, and RIDGELANDS REGIONAL WINDERNESS, between Sunol Wilderness and Del Valle Regional Park.

* * * * *

Fearful of devastating fires within the parks--and conflagrations sweeping into residential areas bordering parklands--the Park District has allotted an additional $84,000 for equipment and manpower, as the number of fire calls answered by the EBRPD "boys in red" increased more than 90%.

A movement led by EBRPD and backed by some 18 other local agencies to establish a fire-fighting unit of the State Conservation Corps in mid-Contra Costa appears successful. Although the ground forces may not be on the scene to help in the current fire season, the location of 40 or 50 trained fire-fighters at the abandoned NIKE site on Bollinger Canyon Road will provide reassurance in the future, which some forecasters see as continuing dry.

The EBRPD Board set its tax rate the same as last year, 20.4 cents per $100 of assessed valuation, though some directors and EBRPD's constant monitor, Joyce Burr of El Cerrito, urged taking another cent to reach the limit. One director who favored taking the extra penny cited the 60.9-cent tax rate of Hayward Area Recreation and Park District and the 58.9-cent rate of Pleasant Hill Recreation and Park District.

With the purchase of the final link (10 acres adjacent to Huckelberry Botanic Preserve at $15,000), the dramatic 27-mile EAST BAY SKYLINE NATIONAL RECREATION TRAIL is cleared for completion. The urban trail, mostly in Contra Costa, will run from Richmond through WILDCAT, TILDEN, ROUND TOP/SIBLEY, HUCKLEBERRY, REDWOOD AND ANTHONY CHABOT to Castro Valley.

The pieces are still being picked up for the unofficially named "Golden Loop" of backpacking and horsemen's trail to circle Central Contra Costa, with overnight camps in WILDCAT/TILDEN, ROUNDTOP/SIBLEY, CHABOT, LAS TRAMPAS, MT. DIABLO STATE PARK, and BRIONES.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

HIKING SCHEDULE

The Mt. Diablo Regional Group of the Sierra Club invites everyone to join them on their hikes. For more information, call Otto Habensak at 939-8608.

Grades - lengths in groups of 5 miles; e.g., 1, 2, 3. Classes - elevation gains in groups of 1000 feet; e.g. A, B, C. Bring lunch and liquids except where otherwise noted.

Oct. 2, Sat. Belina Canyon (2C loop) with Ron Mueller (837-4189). Meet at Las Trampas parking lot, Bollinger Canyon, 9 a.m.

Oct. 9, Sat.- San Pablo and Briones Reservoirs (5B). Meet Otto Habensak (939-8608) at EBMUD's Bear Creek Staging Area, 8 a.m. sharp, for this 22-mile challenge. Plenty of lunch and liquids, please.

Oct. 16, Sat. Mitchell Canyon (2C loop). Meet Jeanie Harmon (658-4393) at end of Mitchell Canyon Road, 9 a.m.

Oct. 17, Sun. A family hike (1A) with Tom Torlakson (757-2379) at Contra Loma Regional Park, starting from staging area there at 10 a.m.

Oct. 23, Sat. Las Trampas with Manny Lindner (837-4444). Meet N.E. corner Danville Blvd. and Del Amigo Road at 9 a.m. for (2B) hike on Corduroy Hill area.

Oct. 31, Sun. A vigorous (2B) on Morgan Territory with Harry Reeves (625-3612). Meet 8:30 a.m. on Main Street in the town of Clayton.

Nov. 6, Sat. A moonlight hike with Otto Habensak (939-8608) on a 1B Rocky Ridge hike. Bring something for a late snack. Reservations required.

Nov. 14, Sun. A vigorous 2C loop from Las Trampas to Ramage Peak with Neil Southwick (939-7334). Meet 9 a.m. at Bollinger Canyon parking lot.

Nov. 21, Sun. Pleasant 1B loop at Kings Canyon and Upper San Leandro Reservoir. Meet Bob and Sue Watson (254-4077) 10 a.m. at Valle Vista Parking lot, 1 mile west of Moraga on Canyon Road.

Dec. 11, Sat. Otto Habensak (939-8608) leads a 3C hike from Las Trampas to Chabot Regional Park. Meet at EBMUD Chabot staging area, near Castro Valley, 8 a.m. sharp, for car shuttle to starting point.

EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT UPDATE (CONTINUED)

Just before reopening of schools, the Board lifted the fees which school districts have been paying for 14 years for naturalist services. The measure, which extends only to schools within the Park District, was recommended by the Park Advisory Committee group studying EBRPD fees and charges. Thomas Schweser of Dublin heads the group.

It appears that an all-out public battle will be called in opposition to the proposed Rancho San Pablo Airstrip, contemplated for construction adjacent to POINT PINOLE REGIONAL SHORELINE north of Richmond. The draft Environmental Impact Report revealed that from 40 to 100 planes would be based there, with from 15,000 to 37,000 landings and take-offs a year, some directly over the Park, where even motor vehicles are prohibited.

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Park Council News

PARK COUNCIL CELEBRATES ITS FIRST QUARTER CENTURY

The Park Council celebrated its 25th anniversary with a dinner at the Concord Inn on November 12, 1976. Nearly seventy old and new friends gathered to greet one another and to reminisce over old times. At the head table were three former presidents, Alvin Burton, Patrick Whittle, and Hulet Hornbeck, and the current president, Susan Watson. Ex-presidents Manny Lindner and Bill Dickinson were out of town but sent their greetings.

On behalf of the Council, Susan presented Al Burton with a photograph of Las Trampas Wilderness Park, an area that he was instrumental in helping to become public parkland. Al received another honor the following night when the Pleasant Hill Park and Recreation Commission presented him with its 4th annual Ecology Award. The Commission is also planting an oak tree in Brookwood Park in his honor. Congratulations, Al!

(Left to right) EBRPD General Manager Dick Trudeau, Al Burton, Mary Burton, and Contra Costa County Planning Director Tony Dehaesus.

(Left to right) Mary and Al Burton, Mary Lynn and Hulet Hornbeck.

Park Council President Sue Watson presents Al Burton with a framed photograph of Las Trampas Ridge.

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TAO HOUSE SUCCESS

by Darlene Blair, President
The Eugene O'Neill Foundation,
Tao House

Tao House, set like a jewel in Las Trampas, is itself the force behind efforts to preserve it for future generations. In this simple, spacious home Eugene O'Neill, America's greatest playwright, found solitude and tranquility in the midst of a world torn by war and wrote his last and greatest plays. Although it has been over thirty years since O'Neill lived there, Tao House seems to suggest his presence. One easily imagines the great man at work in his study, walking down the narrow, winding brick path to the swimming pool, or relaxing on the balcony in view of Mount Diablo and the wide, orchard-filled valley, part of the magnificent panorama that surrounds Tao House.

In October, Tao House was named by Congress and the President of the United States a National Historic Site, designated as a memorial to Eugene O'Neill and destined to become a center for theater arts. The homes of only two other American men of letters have been so honored by our government... those of the poets Longfellow and Carl Sandburg. Wolf Trap and Kennedy Center are the only other National Historic Sites dedicated to the performing arts.

A few weeks before the Congress took this action, our California legislature passed a bill directing $255,000 from the Collier Park Preservation Fund to be used for the purchase of Tao House and its inclusion into the state park system. Before this bill can be activated, an agreement must be signed between the Foundation and the Department of Parks for the operation and maintenance of the site, assuring the state that the foundation will assume all financial responsibility for its administration. The state further demands that a unit of government be a signatory to the agreement. The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors agreed to assume this role and thus cleared the way for an expeditious conclusion to the drawing up of contracts and transferring of title.

When the State takes title to the property, the O'Neill Foundation will administer the program at Tao House and be responsible for restoration and maintenance. Eventually, the U.S. Department of the Interior will assume part of this responsibility. Until then, the foundation will continue to enlarge its membership, plan fund raising events, and seek grants to create at Tao House programs that will stimulate and encourage talent in all areas of the dramatic arts.

Presently the house may be visited only by appointment or at those times when the public is invited to participate in an event. Arrangements for access and use must first be cleared by the several governmental entities involved.

A series of mini-conferences including people working in various aspects of theater are now taking place and will culminate in a more formal seminar to be held later this year to determine the best use for Tao House. One morning we were there with guests when a silver mist obscured the hills and homes of the city were far from us. Then, as we looked toward a grove of trees flanking the lake, a blue heron rose gracefully into the air and flew majestically out of sight unaware of our presence and our awe. This must also be preserved.

Efforts to save Tao House have at last achieved success, but much work remains before its rich promise is to be fulfilled. I have no doubt that the work begun so long ago will continue and flourish and Tao House will become a great and lasting tribute to the genius of Eugene O'Neill.

NORTH PEAK UPDATE

by Susan Watson

Last August, the Contra Costa Park Council appealed the decision of the County Board of Adjustment to grant a land-use permit for nine communication towers and eight equipment sheds on private land at the North Peak of Mt. Diablo. For many years, the owner has operated two towers without county permit.

In appealing to the full Planning Commission, the Council stated that the existing county policy of two towers per site, in effect since 1968, had been enforced on all other communication tower operations in the county. Therefore, the granting of the permit did not conform with county policy. We testified that the county could grant two towers only under their existing policy, and that more towers would require a new county policy. We also entered much testimony on the nature of modern communication towers.

The Planning Commission voted unanimously on October 26, 1976, after a study session and another hearing, to formulate a new county policy in full regard for environmental problems and new technological developments in the telecommunication field.

Meanwhile, the State Department of Parks and Recreation is in the process of condemning the North Peak for addition to Mt. Diablo State Park. The North Peak has long been high-priority land for purchase.

The State has also ordered a study of communication facilities in all of Mt. Diablo State Park in order to master-plan the park facilities. The State's existing policies have been in favor of consolidating existing facilities and phasing out towers as new alternatives are found.

The Council, in cooperation with TCI - the company that owns the private tower on Main Peak - and the Save Mt. Diablo organization, has been investigating the imaginative consolidation of towers on Mt. Tamalpais, authorized by the Marin Water District early this year. Marin's solution is the most exciting news in this field. We believe now that all towers can be removed from both peaks and housed on Main Peak in a disguised facility that has power and road access available. The height makes antenna towers unnecessary. The coordination of frequencies means that 300 to 400 more frequencies will be available than are

possible now. Can engineers, businessmen and environmentalists create something better than we had before? We think so. More on this project in the next News.

HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION NEGOTIATES HUGE ADDITION TO BRIONES REGIONAL PARK

by Lita Mather, President, Brookwood Association

Last year, our neighborhood, located on the eastern side of Briones Park, embarked on a project that was to become a very educational and rewarding experience. This fragile eastern slope was threatened with development when a 141-unit PUD was proposed for the Queen of Heaven Cemetary property, owned by the Catholic Diocese of Oakland. Contained within the parcels under option to Shapell Industries were 850 acres of some of the most beautiful and verdant land in Contra Costa County.

Fleecy mists creep between the rolling hills of Briones Park.

Our Homeowners' Association, Brookwood Association, rallied its members and turned out crowds of 150-200 people for several of the hearings held in Martinez, to safeguard the future of these lands. The results were rewarding. We reduced the number of units from 141 to 83 and, with the help of the Planning Staff, convinced the Planning Commission that any P.U.D. for the area must treat the entire parcel at one time, not just the 114 acres submitted in the first phase of development. A condition of development was the placement of the lands outside the immediate project into a sort of land-bank status until such time as the negotiations with EBRPD were concluded.

Our happiest experience during this past year was the warm and generous response of the Board of Directors of EBRPD. On December 22 they voted unanimously to spend the monies needed to buy 688 acres of rugged land, resplendant with all sorts of wildlife (including two lions!) and trail systems connecting to those already in use in Briones. In addition Shapell Industries has offered the 114 acres of open space outside its development to EBRPD for free--something you can hardly find in this day and age.

The ability of the Board and its staff to see the opportunities open to them to acquire this large and important parcel shows the acquisition policies of the Park District to be flexible and serviceable. When these unusual circumstances arose, the District had the tools and, fortunately, the monies to take an aggressive and very opportune action.

This acquisition has yet to be completed; still needed is the approval of the preliminary development plan by the Board of Supervisors. But, if all goes without a hitch, the land will be within the EBRPD boundaries March 31.

A treat waits for you all...the discovery of the beauties of the eastern slope of Briones. My thanks to you and to your Council for your active and generous support during the past year.

BLUMBERG RESIGNS FROM PARK DISTRICT BOARD; COSTA TAKES HIS PLACE

On February 1 of this year, long-time East Bay Regional Park District Director Fred Blumberg submitted his resignation to the District's board. He stated that his company's policy of not allowing disclosure of the names of its clients put him in a position of conflict with the conditions of the new public disclosure laws.

Mr. Blumberg served the District with distinction for three terms after he was first elected to the board in November, 1963, when Contra Costa County voted to join the District. As representative from Ward 6, he saw the District grow and develop to become this country's finest system of regional parks near urban areas.

He was president of the board during the formation and the first year of the master planning process. His expertise in the financial world influenced the fiscal policies of the District.

Mr. Blumberg also served with the National Regional Parks Association and with the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. He has received many honors in the park and recreation field.

The Park Council wrote to him in part: "Your generous commitment of time to the public need for parks and recreation - especially in these areas where the people live - has served the District and our county well. We thank you for your years of devoted service, we wish you well, and we hope that you will continue to bring your interest and knowledge of the park and recreation field before the public."

Walter Costa, a Lafayette architect, has been appointed to succeed Blumberg on the EBRPD board of directors. Unsuccessful contenders for the seat were Audrey Bramhall, Walnut Creek conservationist, and Louise Giersch, former Antioch mayor and present chairman of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

HIKING SCHEDULE

Mt. Diablo Regional Group of the Sierra Club invites everyone to join them on spring hikes. Always bring your own food and liquids and wear sturdy shoes. For more information, call Otto Haubensak, 939-8608.

Mar. 20 - Sun. Hiking. Neil Southwick (939-7334) will lead a vigorous 3C hike to see Mt. Diablo waterfall area. Meet 9 a.m. in the Juniper parking lot or carpool from Walnut Creek BART station at 8 a.m.

Mar. 26 - Sat. Family Hike. Vern and Pam Carrier (939-2452) lead a 1B family hike on Shell Ridge. Meet 10 a.m. at Indian Valley School at the end of Marshall Dr., Walnut Creek. Reservations, please.

Apr. 2 - Sat. Hiking. Ron Mueller (837-4189) leads a 2C hike into Belina Canyon. Meet 9:30 a.m. in the Bollinger Canyon parking lot.

Apr. 16 - Sat. Family Hiking. Tom Torlakson (757-2379) leads a family hike in new additions to Black Diamond Mines Regional Park. Meet 10 a.m. at the end of Somersville Road.

Apr. 17 - Sun. Hiking. Joe Hipple (939-0286) will show you North Peak and other vistas. 2B loop in Mt. Diablo State Park. Meet 9 a.m. at Juniper parking lot, or carpool from Walnut Creek BART station at 8 a.m.

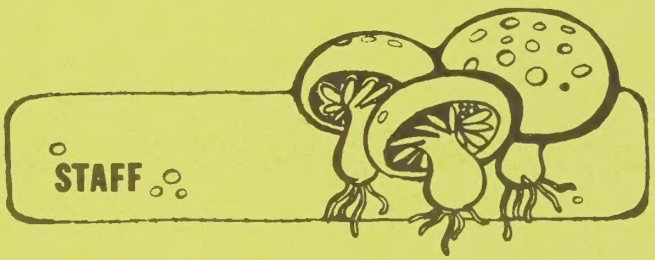
Apr. 23-24 - Sat. and Sun. Backpack. Harry Reeves (625-3612) leads an overnight backpack trip into Black Diamond Mines Park. Central commissary charge is $5.00 per person. Reservations by Apr. 15 from Harry or Otto (939-8608).

Apr. 30 - Sat. Hiking. Otto Haubensak (939-8608) leads a 3C hike from Las Trampas Regional Park to Chabot Regional Park. Car shuttle from Chabot Staging Area, 1 mile north of Willow Park Golf course on Redwood Rd., Castro Valley, at 8 a.m.

RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT REPORT AVAILABLE

The 1976 Annual Report of the Contra Costa Resource Conservation District is now in production and should be available for the asking shortly after this newsletter appears. For a copy, call the District at 687-1780 or stop by their office at 5552 Clayton Road, Concord.

The Park Council works chiefly through the spirit of its members, but our printer and the U.S. Post Office accept only money. The Newsletter is our main expense, and costs are up. If you have not yet paid your membership dues, please remember us. The quality and frequency of the Newsletter depend upon your support. All dues and donations are tax-deductible.



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Contra Costa Park Council
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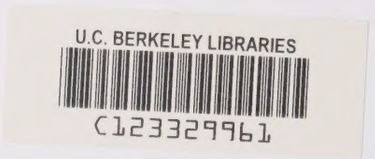

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